

A Year for the Record Books

During a hurricane heavy August and September 2004 that brought record-setting rains, the South Florida Water Management District moved more than 325 billion gallons of stormwater through our water control system of drainage canals, preventing or minimizing widespread flooding. That's enough water to fill 3.6 million Olympic-size swimming pools or the Louisiana Superdome to the rim about 347 times!

C R E D I T S

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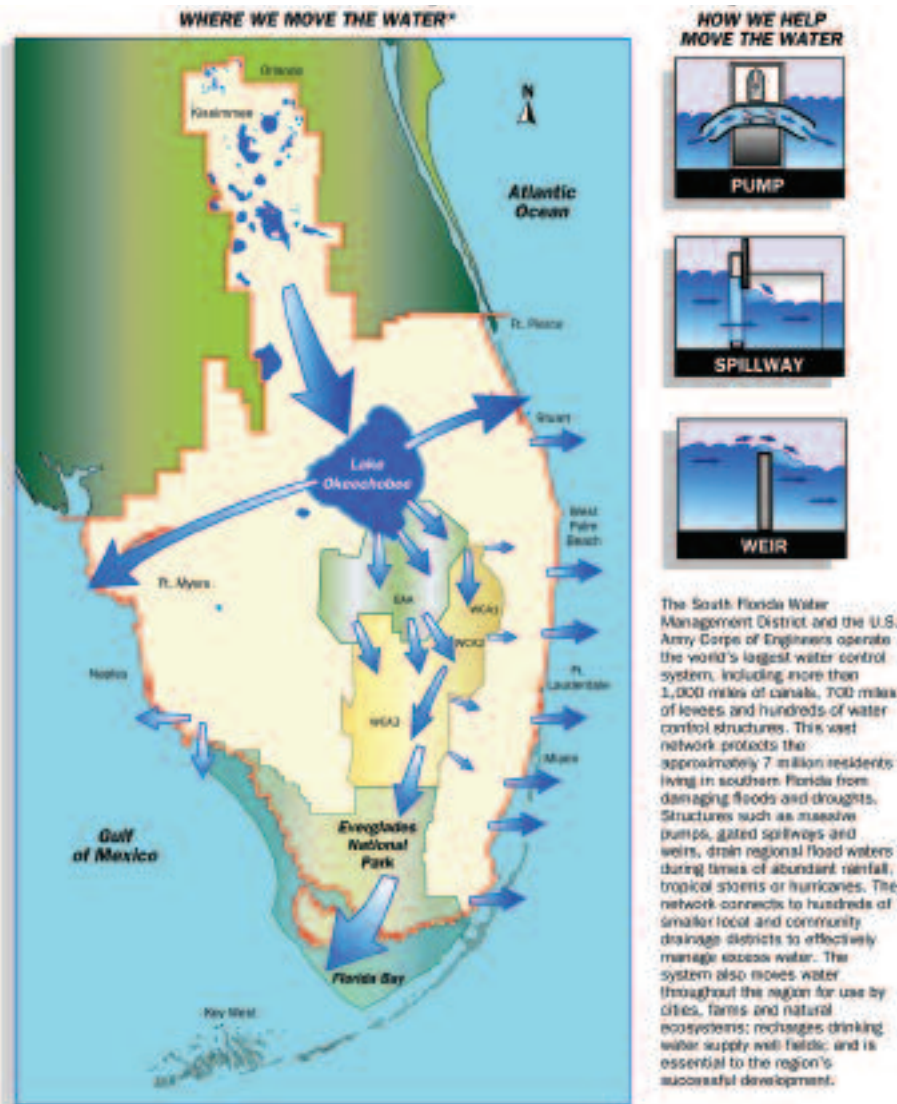
The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.

Our mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply.

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How Stormwater Is Managed Through South Florida's Primary Water Control System



* Depending on surface and groundwater levels, storage availability and weather conditions, stormwater may or may not be moved into areas indicated by the arrows.

"Hurricane Season" continued from inside

available storage areas were maxed out and the level of Lake Okeechobee was rapidly climbing as Hurricane Jeanne lurked off the east coast. While some city, county and drainage district waterways and ditches were still blocked with fallen trees and debris from the earlier storms, the District hired contractors to successfully clear all of its primary canals.

In a "déjà vu all over again" manner, Jeanne followed an almost identical track as Hurricane Frances just three weeks earlier – initially hammering the east coast before making its way inland and dropping additional rain in the already swollen Kissimmee basin and directly over Lake Okeechobee.

"Working through our well-oiled and practiced EOC, we continually assessed needs, identified solutions and took actions to make sure that all District facilities were up and running as soon as possible after each storm," Dean said. "Each time, we issued emergency orders to help expedite recovery and we also provided support and assistance to the state and counties with their recovery efforts when we could."

A CALL FOR RESTORATION ACCELERATION

The South Florida Water Management District is charged with balancing sometimes conflicting mission objectives of protecting and improving water supply, flood control, water quality and natural systems on a daily basis. An active hurricane season compounds and complicates that on-going challenge.

"At the beginning of August, we were concerned about water supplies and the potential for water use restrictions because the typical rainy season was drier than normal," said Dean. "By the end of September, our concern switched to flood control as hurricane-generated rains boosted Lake Okeechobee's water level by almost six feet. In response, the Corps had to begin making releases to the coastal estuaries, putting stress on those downstream ecosystems."

The hurricane season of 2004 vividly underscores the need for accelerated implementation of Everglades restoration projects designed to provide additional water storage alternatives. The *Acceler8* initiative will help put projects in the ground much sooner.

"While we are proud of how well we operated the system under these unusual back-to-back hurricane conditions, the man-made system – along with the natural system – is definitely showing signs of stress," said Dean. "Until we have those much-needed reservoirs and other projects in place, we will continue to be limited in our choices when it comes to moving vast quantities of water."



Question selected from District letters and emails received from the public.

I hear that the South Florida Water Management District offers a variety of excellent career opportunities and business opportunities. How can I join your team? Who knows? Maybe I'll see my face in a future "A Day at the District" column in *WaterMatters*!

The District is, indeed, a great team, dedicated to protecting Florida's valuable natural resources. Over the years, the state has added many responsibilities to our agency, as we have evolved from a primarily flood control entity to a more multifaceted organization. Our goal is to attract, hire and retain the best qualified candidates to help us carry out our diverse mission. And we are committed to the principles and spirit of equal employment opportunity. For the most updated employment information you can visit us online at www.sfwmd.gov and click "Career Opportunities."

Besides our own staff, the District needs the skills and expertise of hundreds of private contractors. And, you can well imagine the amounts of goods and services an agency our size needs. We have taken great strides to inform and educate businesses about procurement opportunities and how to register with us. We have been recognized for our positive contributions to the growth and development of minority firms. The District invites you to look for an opportunity today to partner with us. Current and pending procurement solicitations are online at www.sfwmd.gov click "Procurement & Contracts."

ANSWER TO FIND FREDDY

The Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center

Freddy is visiting the modern, newly opened Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center in Naples featuring aquariums and interactive learning stations. The center educates visitors about the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, which was established for long-term research, education and stewardship of this nearly pristine mangrove forest. The South Florida Water Management District collaborates with the center, providing educational materials and research.

The facility strives to connect the community with Southwest Florida's unique and vital habitats, as well as the research going on there. The learning center features 5,000 square feet of exhibits, four marine research laboratories, a coastal training center, art gallery, aquaria and a visitor's center.

Rookery Bay Reserve is one of the largest mangrove-forested regions in the world and one of the few remaining undisturbed mangrove estuaries in North America. The reserve provides a basis for making informed coastal decisions and works in partnership with local communities to promote stewardship.

For additional information, contact the center at (239) 417-6310.



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